

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-02 PM-03 IO-03 EUR-10 DODE-00 PRS-01

RSR-01 DPW-01 /070 W

----- 015322

R 211210 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3533

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 11172

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SMARR MOPS, CA, ID, PL, VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR JUNE 21, 1973

FOL SENT ACTION SAIGON FM CAN THO AND RPTD FOR YOUR INFO QTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 484

LIMDIS

E. O.11652 GDS

TAGS MARR, MOPBKGHS CA, HU, ID, PL, VS

SUBJECT SITREP FOR JUNE 21, 1973

SUMMARY: MILITARY ACTIVITY REMAINED RELATIVELY LOW BUT BOTH SIDES CONTINUE TO VIOLATE THE CEASEFIRE. THE VINH BINH PROVINCE CHIEF'S WIFE WAS THE VICTIM OF A VC MINE. CHUONG THIEN WILL GET A NEW PROVINCE CHIEF. THE VC AND CORRUPTION CONSPIRE AGAINST HAI YEN DISTRICT SECURITY. END SUMMARY.

1. SECURITY SITUATION: (A) REPORTED JUNE 20 MILITARY ACTIVITY REMAINED AT ABOUT THE SAME LEVEL AS JUNE 19 BUT CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES WERE DOWN. MR IV BRIEFERS
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SHOWED VC- INITIATED INCIDENTS CONTINUE CONCENTRATED IN CHUONG THIEN AND DINH TUONG. THE GOVERNMENT ALSO LAUNCHED OPERATIONS IN THOSE PROVINCES, IN THE CHAU DOC SEVEN MOUNTAINS AREA, AND ALONG THE CAMBODIAN BORDER IN CHAU DOC, KIEN PHONG, AND KIEN TUONG. JUNE 20 MILITARY STATISTICS WERE 34 VC- INITIATED INCIDENTS INCLUDING 20 ROATTACKS BY FIRE (TEN IN CHUONG THIEN) AND TWO GROUND ATTACKS, ONE EACH IN CHUONG THIEN AND DINH TUONG. THE GVN SAYS IT INITIATED NINE OPERATIONS. LOSSES WERE GVN 15 KIA, 107 WIA, 13 MIA, AND 21 WEAPONS LOST, AND VC 20 KIA, ONE CAPTURED AND 45 SUSPECTS DETAINED.

(B) THE VC AMBUSHED A RIVER RESUPPLY CONVOY 10-12 KILOMETERS SOUTHWEST OF VI THANH IN CHUONG THIEN JUNE 20, SINKING ONE BOAT AND KILLING FOUR SOLDIERS. ARVN RESPONDED WITH AN AIRSTRIKE AND REPORTED KILLING 15 VC.

(C) A COMMAND- DETONATED MINE IN VINH BINH KILLED PROVINCE CHIEF COL NGUYEN HAU KIEM' S WIFE JUNE 20. THE CHAU THANH DISTRICT CHIEF' S WIFE AND FOUR UNIDENTIFIED CHILDREN RIDING IN THE JEEP WITH MRS. KIEM ALSO DIED. IT IS NOT KNOWN IF THE VC SPECIFICALLY TARGETED THE OFFICIALS' FAMILIES BUT THE VINH BINH USAID REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS THAT THE TWO WOMEN OPENLY DISCUSSED MAKING THE FATAL TRIP IN THE HEARING OF MANY PEOPLE AT THE JUNE 19 PROVINCIAL ARMED FORCES DAY CEREMONYHM AT THE SAME ARMED FORCES DAY CELEBRATION THE PROVINCE CHIEF AWARDED MEDALS TO SOLDIERS WHO HAD DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES IN HIS RECENTLY INITIATED " ENEMY EXTERMINATION CAMPAIGN" (CAN THO 0468). DURING HIS JUNE 18 BRIEFING COL KIEM ORDERED COMMANDERS TO STEP- UP THE CAMPAIGN, WHICH BOASTS 73 VC KILLED SINCE CEASEFIRE II. THE CONGEN SENT A WREATH FOR MRS. KIEM.

2. GVN ACTIVITIES: (A) WE UNDERSTAND THAT 15 TH ARVN REGIMZLL COMMANDER COL HUYNH BA CAN HAS BEEN NAMED TO SUCCEED CHUONG THIEN PROVINCE CHIEF LTC TRAN THIEN KHANG (CAN THO 0459). CAN HAS A GOOD REPUTATION AND HIS ASSIGN - MENT PROBABLY REFLECTS THE HIGH LEVEL OF IV CONCERN FOR THE SECURITY OF THE PROVINCE. THE POST IS USUALLY AN EXILE ASSIGNMENT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN FROM GRACE.

(B) ELEVEN SHIPS CROSSED INTO VIET GLX ON THE WAY BACK FROM PHNOM PENH AT 1430 JUNE 20. THERE WERE NO INCIDENTS ON THIS SIDE OF THE BORDER.

3. COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES: VC PROPAGANDA TEAMS HAVE
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REPORTEDLY FLOATED TWO RUMORS IN KIEN PHONG PROVINCE, AT LEAST ONE AIMED AT SHOWING THAT THE CEASEFIRE II COMMUNIQUE CONTAINED CONCESSIONS FAVORABLE TO THE VC. THE FIRST VC RUMOR HOLDS THAT THE GVN WILL BE FORCED TO CONCEDE KIEN PHONG PROVINCE TO THE VC. AREA RESIDENTS WERE REPORTEDLY ANXIOUS ABOUT THE TALE WHICH SAID THAT THE GVN AND VC HAD AGREED ON A MAP SHOWING THE VC IN FULL MILITARY AND

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL OF THE PROVINCE AND ITS POPULATION. THE OTHER RUMOR ATTRIBUTED TO VC PROSELYTING CADRE STATED THAT THE VC HAVE CREATED A NEW " TAN HONG" PROVINCE COMPOSED OF TAN CHAU DISTRICT OF CHAU DOC AND HONG NGU DISTRICT OF KIEN PHONG. (COMMENT: RUMOR- MONGERING IS A TRADITIONAL VC PROPAGANDA TACTIC. ALTHOUGH THE RUMOR WILL NOT PROVE OUT, IT SERVES A VC PURPOSE BY CONDITIONING THE PEOPLE TO THINK OF THE VC AS ABLE TO NEGOTIATE POLITICAL CONCESSIONS FROM THE GVN.)

4. SELECTED PROVINCE COMMENT: (A) THE VC OVERRAN FOUR OUTPOSTS IN HAI YEN (CAI NUOC) DISTRICT, AN XUYEN PROVINCE THE WEEK OF JUNE 11-17 (CAN THO 0433). WE HAVE ALSO REPORTED THAT THE DISTRICT CHIEF IS UNDER INVESTIGATION (CAN THO 0433). NOW TWO USAID LOCAL EMPLOYEES, WHO TRAVELLED TO HAI YEN JUNE 9-11 HAVE REPORTED THAT A COMBINATION OF CORRUPTION AND INCREASED VC ACTIVITY HAVE CAUSED SECURITY TO DETERIORATE. THEY SAID THE GVN HAS LOST CONTROL OF THREE HAMLETS SINCE JANUARY 28 AND THAT TWO THOUSAND RURAL RESIDENTS HAVE FLED TO THE DISTRICT CAPITAL BECAUSE OF INCREASED VC ACTIVITY. HAMLET OFFICIALS FROM B AND C HAMLETS REPORTEDLY LIVE IN THE DISTRICT TOWN. THEY FOUND THAT HAPLESS HAI YEN RESIDENTS, EVEN IN THE DISTRICT TOWN, ARE SUBJECT TO INCREASING VC TAXATION. (B) WHILE THE VC ARE BECOMING MORE ACTIVE IN THE DISTRICT, GVN OFFICIALS, INCLUDING OUTPOST COMMANDERS, ARE REPORTEDLY NEGLECTING THEIR DUTIES AND INDULGING IN INCREASED CORRUPTION. FOR A FEE, RF AND PF OUTPOST COMMANDERS SHELTER DRAFT DODGERS AND EX DESERTERS FROM POLICE PATROLS. OTHER OFFICERS TAKE PAYMENTS FROM SOLDIERS FOR TRANSFERS, PROMOTIONS, AND LEAVES. THE POLICE AND MILITARY BOTH TAKE A PERCENTAGE OF SMUGGLING PROFITS. MEANWHILE PROPAGANDA, CHIEU HOI, AND PUBLIC HEALTH AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES SUFFER FROM NEGLECT. THE USAID EMPLOYEES FOUND THAT CIVILIANS, EVEN THOSE WOUNDED IN VC ATTACKS, FREQUENTLY

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GO TO THE VC FOR TREATMENT BECAUSE GVN HEALTH SERVICES AT THE DISTRICT ARE PRACTICALLY NONEXISTENT. THEY REPORTED THAT THE ARRIVAL OF 21 ST ARVN DIVISION FORCES JUNE 9, HOWEVER, CALMED THE DISTRICT POPULACE, WHICH WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY NERVOUS ABOUT UNIMPEDED VC ACCESS TO POPULATED AREAS.

5. ICCS: AN ICCS REGION VII SOURCE DISCLOSED THAT THE POLISH AMBASSADOR RECENTLY TOLD AMBASSADOR GAUVIN THAT POLAND WOULD LIKE TO GET OUT OF THE ICCS. HE SAID HIS COUNTRY' S PARTICIPATION ON THE CBNMISSION IS " HARMING ITS PATIONS WITH OTHERS." SOME REGION VII POLISH ICCS MEMBERS HAVE ALSO COMMENTED TO THEIR COMMISSCHN COLLEAGUES THAT POLISH ICCS PARTICIPATION IS NOT IN POLAND' S OWN BEST INTEREST. SOME HAVE EVEN SUGGESTED THAT A TWO PARTY ICCS

WOULD DO JUST AS WELL AS A FOUR PARTY ICCS IMPLYING THAT THE
INDONESIANS AND HUNGARIANS COULD CARRY ON IF THE POLES LEFT
THE COMMISSION TO BALANCE THE CANADIAN DEPARTURE.
COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THE INDONESIANS WOULD BALK AT ANY
PROPOSAL WHICH WOULD LEAVE THEM ALONE TO FACE THE
INTRASIGENT HUNGARIANS. WISNE UNQUOTE
QWHITEHOUSE

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** LIMDIS
*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 JUN 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: elyme
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SAIGON11172
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730625/aaaajily.tel
Line Count: 181
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: elyme
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21-Aug-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <18-Oct-2001 by elyme>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> wfs 980217
Subject: SITREP FOR JUNE 21, 1973
TAGS: MARR, MOPS, CA, ID, PL, VS
To: EA
JEC PARIS
SECSTATE WASHDC
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005